

TENSAS RIVER NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

APRIL 18, 1996.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, from the Committee on Resources,
submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany H.R. 2660]

[Including cost estimate of the Congressional Budget Office]

The Committee on Resources, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 2660) to increase the amount authorized to be appropriated to the Department of the Interior for the Tensas River National Wildlife Refuge, having considered the same, report favorably thereon without amendment and recommend that the bill do pass.

PURPOSE OF THE BILL

The purpose of H.R. 2660 is to increase the amount authorized to be appropriated to the Department of the Interior for the Tensas River National Wildlife Refuge.

BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR LEGISLATION

The Tensas River National Wildlife Refuge was established on June 28, 1980, by Public Law 96-285, to preserve the largest remaining privately-owned bottomland hardwood tract in the Lower Mississippi River Delta. The Act authorizes \$10 million for the Department of the Interior and \$40 million for the Department of the Army for land acquisition. The Department of the Interior portion of the acquisition funding is obtained through the Land and Water Conservation Fund (16 U.S.C. 460-4).

The Tensas River lands support a tremendous variety of wildlife including the largest white-tailed deer herd in Louisiana. This is indicative of the wide diversity of habitat types occurring in the Refuge. In addition to the numerous species of small mammal and passerine birds observed, the area provides habitat for the Louisi-

ana black bear. The Tensas River population is one of only two known populations of this subspecies in existence.

The backwater sloughs, lakes, and bayous provide habitat for a great diversity of aquatic life including fish, reptiles, amphibians, mollusks, and crustaceans. Although water quality in the Tensas River has been degraded by agricultural runoff, the meandering character of the River has been preserved. The Tensas River is the only major waterway in the Louisiana delta that has not been extensively altered by channelization.

The Tensas River Basin is within the historic ranges of several Federally-listed endangered or threatened species. Reliable reports of bald eagle sightings have been received from within this area. The backwater lakes and sloughs continue to provide habitat for the American alligator. The Bachman's warbler may frequent the area, and the Arctic peregrine falcon possibly migrates through in the fall and the spring.

To date, Congress has appropriated \$20 million for land acquisition at the Refuge (through two consecutive authorizations of \$10 million). Due to higher than anticipated land costs for an expansion of the Refuge (as authorized by Public Law 98-581), additional funds may be necessary to complete the acquisition process. H.R. 2660 makes two changes in Public Law 98-285: it increases from \$10 to \$20 million the amount that may be appropriated to the Department of the Interior and makes funding available beginning October 1, 1995. The language removes the need for future amendments to the authorizing Act and it will allow the Department of the Interior to acquire those critical lands for the Tensas River National Wildlife Refuge.

COMMITTEE ACTION

H.R. 2660 was introduced on November 17, 1995, by Congressman Jim McCrery. The bill was referred to the Committee on Resources, and within the Committee to the Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife and Oceans.

On December 14, 1995, the Subcommittee held a hearing on H.R. 2660. The following testified in support of the bill: Congressman Jim McCrery; Dr. Robert P. Davison, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior; and Mr. Murray Lloyd, President, Black Bear Conservation Committee.

On March 14, 1996, the Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife and Oceans met to markup H.R. 2660 and ordered it reported favorably, without amendment, to the Full Committee on Resources by voice vote.

On March 28, 1996, the Committee on Resources met to consider H.R. 2660. There were no amendments, and the Committee ordered the bill favorably reported to the House of Representatives by voice vote, in the presence of a quorum.

SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. INCREASE IN AMOUNT AUTHORIZED TO BE APPROPRIATED
TO THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR FOR THE TENSAS RIVER
NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Section 5 of "An Act to establish the Tensas River National Wildlife Refuge" is amended to read as follows:

(1) beginning October 1, 1995, not to exceed \$20,000,000 to the Department of the Interior.

COMMITTEE OVERSIGHT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

With respect to the requirements of clause 2(l)(3) of rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives, and clause 2(b)(1) of rule X of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee on Resources' oversight findings and recommendations are reflected in the body of this report.

INFLATIONARY IMPACT STATEMENT

Pursuant to clause 2(l)(4) of rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee estimates that the enactment of H.R. 2660 will have no significant inflationary impact on prices and costs in the operation of the national economy.

COST OF THE LEGISLATION

Clause 7(a) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives requires an estimate and a comparison by the Committee of the costs which would be incurred in carrying out H.R. 2660. However, clause 7(d) of that Rule provides that this requirement does not apply when the Committee has included in its report a timely submitted cost estimate of the bill prepared by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office under section 403 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974.

COMPLIANCE WITH HOUSE RULE XI

1. With respect to the requirement of clause 2(l)(3)(B) of rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives and section 308(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, H.R. 2660 does not contain any new budget authority, spending authority, credit authority, or an increase or decrease in revenues or tax expenditures.

2. With respect to the requirement of clause 2(l)(3)(D) of rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee has received no report of oversight findings and recommendations from the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight on the subject of H.R. 2660.

3. With respect to the requirement of clause 2(l)(3)(C) of rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives and section 403 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the Committee has received the following cost estimate for H.R. 2660 from the Director of the Congressional Budget Office.

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

U.S. CONGRESS,
CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,
Washington, DC, April 17, 1996.

Hon. DON YOUNG,
*Chairman, Committee on Resources,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The Congressional Budget Office has reviewed H.R. 2660, a bill to increase the amount authorized to be appropriated to the Department of the Interior for the Tensas River National Wildlife Refuge, as ordered reported by the House Committee on Resources on March 28, 1996. Assuming appropriation of the authorized amounts, CBO estimates that implementing this legislation would cost the federal government between \$17 million and \$20 million over the next 10 to 15 years.

H.R. 2660 would authorize appropriations of an additional \$20 million to acquire land for the Tensas River National Wildlife Refuge in Louisiana. (Appropriations of \$20.3 million have previously been provided and spent for this purpose.) Based on information provided by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, CBO estimates that the agency would need between \$17 million and \$20 million to acquire another 13,300 acres for the refuge. Based on the agency's current land acquisition priorities, we expect that most of the additional funding would probably not be requested or appropriated for several years. Annual expenses to manage the additional acreage and make payments to local governments under the Refuge Revenue Sharing Act once all property is acquired are not expected to be significant.

H.R. 2660 does not contain any private sector or intergovernmental mandates as defined in Public Law 104-4 and would impose no direct costs on state, local, or tribal governments. Finally, the bill would not affect direct spending or receipts; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures would not apply.

If you wish further details on this estimate, we will be pleased to provide them. The CBO staff contact is Deborah Reis.

Sincerely,

JAMES L. BLUM
(For June E. O'Neill, Director).

COMPLIANCE WITH PUBLIC LAW 104-4

H.R. 2660 contains no unfunded mandates.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

The Committee has received no departmental reports on H.R. 2660.

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW MADE BY THE BILL, AS REPORTED

In compliance with clause 3 of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, changes in existing law made by the bill, as reported, are shown as follows (new matter is printed in italic, and existing law in which no change is proposed is shown in roman):

SECTION 5 OF THE ACT OF JUNE 28, 1980

AN ACT To establish the Tensas River National Wildlife Refuge

SEC 5. For purposes of carrying out this Act, there are authorized to be appropriated—

[(1) beginning October 1, 1985, not to exceed \$10,000,000 to the Department of the Interior; and]

(1) beginning October 1, 1995, not to exceed \$20,000,000 to the Department of the Interior; and

* * * * *